

Claims

1. An interface panel for a fluid-filled elastomeric bladder disposed in a vehicle seat for occupant weight estimation, said interface panel having a non-uniform rigidity defined by multiple regions of substantial rigidity separated by regions of insubstantial rigidity such that said multiple regions of substantial rigidity effect regional transfer of occupant weight to said bladder while protecting said bladder from puncture damage and limiting bladder sensitivity to irregularities of said seat.
- 5 2. An interface panel according to Claim 1, comprising:  
a base sheet of insubstantial rigidity; and  
multiple plates of substantial rigidity affixed to said base sheet.
3. An interface panel according to Claim 2, wherein said base sheet is a fabric material.
4. An interface panel according to Claim 2, wherein said multiple plates exhibit different degrees of rigidity.
5. An interface panel according to Claim 4, wherein said multiple plates have different thicknesses.
6. An interface panel according to Claim 1, comprising:  
a unitary sheet of non-uniform thickness.

7. An interface panel according to Claim 1, comprising:  
multiple plates of substantial rigidity affixed to a surface of said seat that engages said fluid-filled bladder.

8. An interface panel according to Claim 7, wherein said multiple plates are affixed to a foam cushion of said seat by insert molding.